A Good Way to Disseminate Your University of Michigan Academic Products to the General Public Through Deep Blue and Creative Commons

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1   Summary

Deep Blue is a University of Michigan library system that permanantly stores electonic versions of faculty-generated content. Creative Commons is an addendum to copyright that gives people permission to disseminate and use your work. Together, these make a public publishing platform that's pretty easy to set up for academic posters, talk slides, audio recordings, published or unpublished manuscripts, data sets, what have you.

2   Introduction

If you have ever given a talk at a national meeting or presented a poster at a conference, you've probably received a request for your slides or for an electronic copy of your poster. Sometimes you might print out some of these as hard copies to hand to anyone who requests them. More often you'll just give out your email address and manually mail documents to interested colleagues.

At the University of Michigan there is an additional way to publish your slides or posters or figures, drawings, datasets, sound recordings, essays, or what have you—Deep Blue.

Deep Blue is a service provided by the University of Michigan libraries to the faculty. If you go to Deep Blue at

http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/

you can search for your name under Authors and you may find something there. The Deep Blue team has been busy buying back the copyrights you gave away to the academic publishing companies that own the journals that published your manuscripts. Then they put those articles on Deep Blue and promise to keep them publicly accessible through a stable URL as long as is technologically feasible.

You can add anything you want to Deep Blue and it will become part of the University of Michigan's online public repository, accessible through a short URL.

For instance, you can see one of mine:

http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/71389

This link leads to a project called "Progress Testing of Basic Science Application During a Clinical Competency-Based Curriculum Pilot" and includes slides from a talk I gave at the Ottawa Conference in Florida in 2010, an article version of that talk, and a poster presentation based on that same data. You can download all 3 files from that URL. I can add more files there, but I need special permission from the Deep Blue team to delete them—permanance is the goal.

If you look at those, you'll notice that I've labelled them all as distributed under a Creative Commons license (cc 3.0: BY-NC-SA). Creative Commons is non-profit organization that adds legally-defensible language to your automatically-conferred copyrights. Copyright doesn't allow anyone to reproduce, distribute, alter, or profit from your work without your explicit permission. This can scare people off

from passing around your work to their colleagues, or quoting you at length in articles, or putting your research findings to profitable use. This may make you happy or it may make you sad, but copyright itself doesn't care. Creative Commons cares. Creative Commons lets you specify what you don't mind people doing with your work.

I've decided that the Creative Commons license 3.0 BY-NC-SA is the most conducive to academic dissemination: you can distribute or alter my work as long as you 1) attribute the work to me (BY), 2) do not generate profit from it (NC), 3) share the work and any derivative work you make from it using the same 3.0 BY-NC-SA license. There are other types of Creative Commons licenses and you can pick your favorite.

Below I tell you how I share things using Deep Blue and Creative Commons. There are probably other ways to do these things and systems will certainly change over time. But most of this should work for you if you are a University of Michigan employee who generates intellectual content worth sharing publicly on the internet.

3 Put Something on Deep Blue

Let's say you have something—say a pdf file of a poster that you haven't printed yet. Here's how to put it on Deep Blue.

If you haven't done this before you might have to start a Deep Blue account. When I first tried this the Deep Blue team had to set up your account manually. I think now you can just log on using your kerberos password and start uploading things. Try it and see.

3.1 Deposit/Edit Items

From the home screen of Deep Blue you can see the "Deposit/Edit Items" link on the left banner. When you click that, you'll see a button to "Start a New Deposit." Click that. Then you'll be asked to choose a collection into which your deposit will go. Mine all go in "Medical Education, Department of" but yours will go wherever makes the most sense.

Next you'll get to the "Describe Your Item" page. This is the biggie. Enter the authors, their deparmental affiliations, the title, the reference, the abstract, etc. All this stuff will make your deposit discoverable by search so be generous but specific with your keywords and accurate with your publication date and description.

Next it's time to upload something into your collection. But wait before you upload your poster pdf! Try this neat trick first.

3.2 Make an abstract text file

Copy the abstract of your poster to a text file (or a Word file, but Word is a crummy program so why bother). Save it as something descriptive and self-promotional, such as "stansfield-2012-abstract.txt" and then upload that to your deposit (Choose File, set the File Description to something useful like "Text file of report abstract" and click "Next").

3.3 Publish it

Now you should see that your "File Uploaded Successfully" and you should see a nice table describing your abstract file. Click "Next" again, verify all the information you already entered, click "Next" again and you will come to the "There is one last step..." page.

This is the big deal page. Here you give the Regents of the University of Michigan permission to keep and disseminate your work. Read the license over to make sure you want to do this.

There is a little paragraph here called "Creative Commons" that simply says that the library will help you add a Creative Commons license to your work. They probably will. I haven't really asked them for help yet.

If you agree with everything on this page, click the "I grant the license: PUBLISH" button and *voila!* you have published your poster abstract.

3.4   Go get your URL

Look back to that left banner and you should still see the "Deposit/Edit Items" link. Click that. Then click on the "View Accepted Deposits" button. You'll see a list of all the deposits you have made to Deep Blue including the one you just made. Click on the title of the one you just made.

There near the top of that page you'll see "Please use this persistent URL to cite or link to this item:" followed by a nice, relatively short URL. Select and copy that: that is the URL that will link to your poster as long as Deep Blue can keep their system going.

4   Finalize your poster and license it with Creative Commons

Now you can add that URL to the poster itself. Neat, right? Now people who view the poster can write down the URL and get it themselves. Or you can hand out slips of paper with the URL or write it on the back of your business card. If you're fancy, you can make a QR code of your URL and put it on your poster (or your name tag, or your coffee cup, etc.) so people can grab the URL with their smart phones without any typing or writing.

For instance, I've been adding this report to Deep Blue as I write it, so now I can tell you that you can get a pdf of it at this URL:

<div align="center">

http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/91292

</div>

Here. I'll make a QR code of it as well, just to be cute:

I made that by going to www.the-qrcode-generator.com and it took a few seconds. Try it with your phone and it should take you to this report.

So now you have your URL and have added it to your poster or slides or manuscript, you can register it with Creative Commons.

4.1   Register with Creative Commons

Go to the Creative Commons website:

<div align="center">

http://creativecommons.org/

</div>

If you're curious, look around and see all the interesting work Creative Commons is doing to melt the chilling effect of the current draconian copyright law. It's a great project and if you're like me you'll quickly see the value in taking the time to put this license on your work—people will feel empowered to share and use the fruits of your labor. Which is presumably the whole point of your labor.

At the top, select "Licenses" from the green banner menu, then "Choose a License." Then answer the little questionnaire until you get your license. Enter the name of your work, the attribution (your name or your group or whoever) and—importantly!—enter the Deep Blue URL in the "Attribute work to URL" and "Source work URL" fields.

Once you are done and have submitted the form, you'll see your license. I always get the 3.0 BY-NC-SA license because (as I mentioned above) I find it most condusive to sharing academic work. Your milage may vary.

In any case you are done now and can put in your document. This makes it easier for everyone, especially you, to share your document online with the restrictions you prefer made explicit and legally binding.

I like to download an encapsulated post-script (eps) or portable network graphics (png) version of the licence logo and include it in my document, but you don't have to:[1]

Once all that is done, and you've included the URL and Creative Commons license into your document, you can upload it to Deep Blue.

4.2 Put the thing on Deep Blue

Back at the Deep Blue site (let's say you kept that window open; if not, log back in again and get back to the list of all your accepted deposits), select the title of the deposit you're working on. You'll see the description of your deposit and a link to the abstract text file you already uploaded. Select the "Edit" button next to the deposit URL and you'll see a page with all the information about your deposit.

At the bottom of that page is the list of "Bitstreams." "Bitstream" seems to be the word that the Deep Blue team settled on as a generic term for any document you might choose to upload. I haven't heard that word anywhere else; maybe it will catch on or maybe I'm just behind the times.

In any case here's where you upload your finished document. Click the "Add Bitstream" button, "Choose file" and upload it. And now you are done: you have published your document, made readers aware of how to share it and what sorts of sharing are okay with you. It will be a permanant part of the University of Michigan's digital library and accessible through that URL for as long as the Deep Blue team can keep their committment.

5 In Conclusion

This may seem like a lot of fiddling and clicking and trying to be fancy, but it's kind of a big deal. I've worked at several universities in my career and at each one I've kept files online for sharing. Each time, when I move on, it is burdensome to back up and carry with me all those files; I don't think I've ever taken the time to re-post them all at my new place. All that information vanishes from the web when the University cleans out my internet accounts. Even the things I re-post end up having new URLs so any website that linked to me before now has a dead link. Deep Blue allows me to keep stuff there perpetually and the links stay alive. Problem solved.

Also, I've become aware of the difficulties in disseminating work that isn't really worthy of publication. This report, for instance, isn't worth a journal article publication but is probably worth sharing with University of Michigan faculty who are interested. Or my parents. They like stuff like this. Journals are increasingly willing to send their readers to supplemental materials such as the raw data sets or detailed analysis results—it increases the transparancy of science while allowing journals to keep their page counts profitably small.

And while we're on the subject of journal profitability, remember that when an Elsevier-owned journal accepts your manuscript for publication, they require that you sign over your copyright to them. After that point, you are not allowed to distribute that published article to your colleagues and friends without their permission. While I have no illusions that things will change any time soon, this Deep Blue and Creative Commons procedure is a quick, easy way to self-publish things through the University while keeping more control over the distribution rights.

Things will change and this report will quickly become obsolete. I'm pretty sure these instructions will work for you without too much trouble, but of course nothing is simple. If there are enough errors or inaccuracies here let me know and I'll write an appendix or a second edition of this. At this moment my email address is `rbrent@umich.edu`. But if that bounces, you'll have to Google me. Assuming Google still exists.

This report is distributed under a Creative Commons 3.0 BY-NC-SA licence (attribute to R. Brent Stansfield) and can be downloaded from `http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/91292`

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[1]There's a "Get high resolution and vector versions of the license graphics" link on the right beneath the header reading "Offline Work?" Just make sure you grab the right one.